DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 272 655 CE 043 030

AUTHOR Dooley, Maureen
TITLE Peer Tutoring in an ABE Special Education Setting. TECHNIQUES.
PUB DATE Jun 84
NOTE 3p.; Edited from the Virginia ABE Newsletter.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT Lifelong Learning; v7 n8 p29-30 Jun 1984

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; *Peer Teaching; *Severe Mental Retardation; *Special Education; Teaching Methods; *Tutoring; Vocational Rehabilitation
IDENTIFIERS *Cross Ability Tutoring

ABSTRACT

Cross ability tutoring--having more advanced students work with slower learners--seems to provide the repetitions required to teach the severely retarded a skill. At the Eastern Shore Vocational and Rehabilitation Center (Virginia), students who read at grade 2.0 or better are paired with others, some of whom are working on writing their names or addresses and telephone numbers. Whenever possible, tutees select their helpers, usually choosing co-workers in vocational work. Tutors are selected because of their patience, ability to master the material taught, desire to help, legible handwriting, and positive attitudes. Each attends a workshop on how to teach given by the adult basic education (ABE) instructor. Each day the students pair off for tutorials which last from 5 to 30 minutes. The work is shown to the ABE instructor during the tutor's regular class. The tutorials increase the self-esteem of the tutees and the tutors. Peer tutoring between cross-ability students challenges the ABE teacher by providing a new instructional approach that must be learned and continually refined. Drawbacks include inadvertent reinforcement of errors that tutors do not recognize and personalities that do not mesh. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

TECHNíQUES

ED272655

Edited from the Virginia ABE Newsletter

Peer Tutoring in an ABE Special Education Setting

Even the most patient ABE or special education teacher sometimes becomes bored with the number of repetitions needed to teach the severely retarded a particular skill. Different approaches—tactile, oral, auditory, visual—different AV gadgets—typewriters, computers, calculators, teaching machines—extend the interest of teachers and students and help them stay on task. But, no matter the trimmings, it is the endless repetition that eventually does the job.

Cross ability tutoring, having more advanced students work with slower learners, seems to provide these repetitions at the Eastern Shore Vocational and Rehabilitation Center. Students who read at grade 2.0 or better are paired with others, some of whom are working on writing their names or addresses and phone numbers.

The Vocational Center is a small one; everyone knows one another. While ABE classes are tracked, vocational work is not. Students work side by side in the greenhouse, ceramics shop, retail store, and constructing crabpots. Whenever possible, tutees select their helpers, usually choosing co-workers. One learner is a formerly lackadaisical student motivated largely by his affection for his tutor.

Tutors are selected because of their patience, ability to master the material to be taught, desire to help, legible handwriting, and positive attitudes. Each attends a workshop (three one-hour classes) on how to teach, given by the ABE instructor. Each must be able to spell correctly the words to be taught and recognize errors when they appear. Each learns tips on teaching through mock tutorials with the ABE teacher playing the role of tutor and the student the role of tutee and then reversing roles. Particular goals are discussed; each tutee will, for example, learn to write his or her name, address, and phone number without assistance. To serve this objective, prospective tutors learn the following procedure:

1. Ask the students to write his/her name.
2. After the attempt, say "good" or "okay," etc.
3. Make any corrections by writing the word again in large clear letters.
4. Say, "Now you try it."
5. Always praise what is correct as the work is rewritten.
6. Always remember to repeat what has been learned as you try to teach something new.
7. Say, "This is the way your name looks."
8. Repeat each step.

Each day have the students pair off for tutorials which last from 5 to 30 minutes, varying according to time available and the moods of participants. The routine is set. Each student has a legal pad with each page dated. The day's work is shown to the ABE instructor when the tutor comes to his or her regular class. At that time, any questions or problems are discussed.

The tutorials increase the self-esteem of the tutees. All respond positively to the additional effort expended on them. All feel that the work they are doing is important, that they are important.

The process increases the self-esteem of the tutors also. They are proud of their students' progress and their own part in it. They feel proud that they are teachers and have a "peer" relationship with other teachers, including their ABE instructor. Almost to a person, this confidence carries over to their own classwork.

CE043030

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

American Assn for Adult & Continuing Education

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Peer tutoring between cross-ability students challenges the ABE teacher by providing a new instructional approach which must be learned and continually refined. This helps the teacher maintain enthusiasm.

There are drawbacks. Tutors sometimes inadvertently reinforce errors by not recognizing them. When Ricky began to misspell "Madison," so did his tutor. Vigilance on the part of the ABE instructor minimizes this potential difficulty. Occasionally tutors change their initial error and then teach it to their pupils. One tutor insisted that an "i" be dotted, and turned a passable "i" into an incorrect "p." Sometimes personalities don't mesh. One tutor was relieved of responsibility because he barked orders to his tutee.

Cross-ability teaching, long used in many classrooms, can be employed successfully with many students. This is just one more idea up an already crowded sleeve for ABE and special education teachers who face the posibility of early burn-out.

Maureen Dooley

Ms. Dooley is the ABE teacher at the Eastern Shore Vocational Rehabilitation Center at Belle Haven.